

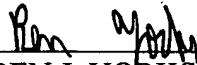
disclosed in the above-entitled application is clearly not a threaded fastener. The applicant submits that the claims comply with the second paragraph of §112.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dobrovolny in view of Green and Jackson. Both Green and Dobrovolny require rotation of a threaded knob to secure a heart stabilizer. This is exactly the opposite from claim 1 and 11 which require that the heart stabilizer be held without rotation of a threaded fastener. Additionally, neither reference discloses releasing a jaw member so that a spring force returns the member and secures an end effector to a heart stabilizer as recited in claim 16. For these reasons the applicant submits that the art cited by the Examiner does not render obvious claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-20.

In view of the above it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections is requested. Allowance of claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-20 at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
IRELL & MANELLA LLP

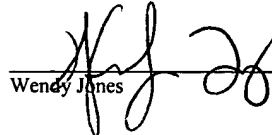
Dated: June 5, 2003


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Wendy Jones
Date 6/5/03

APPENDIX

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 11 and 16 have been amended as follows.

1 1. (Thrice Amended) A support arm assembly, comprising:
2 a table mount;
3 an arm coupled to said table mount;
4 an end effector coupled to said arm, said end effector having a jaw member coupled to
5 a spring; and,
6 a heart stabilizer held by said jaw member of said end effector without rotation of a
7 threaded[actuation of any] fastener[s].

1 11. (Thrice Amended) A support arm assembly, comprising:
2 a table mount adapted to be secured to the table;
3 a first linkage coupled to said table mount;
4 a second linkage pivotally coupled to said first linkage;
5 a third linkage pivotally coupled to said second linkage;
6 an end effector pivotally coupled to said third linkage and having a jaw member
7 coupled to a spring; and,
8 a heart stabilizer held by said jaw member of said end effector without rotation of a
9 threaded[actuation of any] fastener[s].

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1 16. (Twice Amended) A method for coupling a heart stabilizer to a table,
2 comprising:
3 mounting a support arm to the table;
4 adjusting a position of an end effector of the support arm, the end effector having a
5 retractable jaw member;
6 retracting the jaw member, the retraction creates a spring force;
7 inserting a heart stabilizer into the end effector; and;
8 releasing the jaw member so that the spring force returns the jaw member and[to]
9 secures the end effector to the heart stabilizer[support arm].

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